Seasonable Advice

TO ALL

Protestant People

OF

ENGLAND.

Heartily recommended by a Lover of his COUNTREY.

LONDON,

Printed for *Randal Taylor*. 1681.

Seasonable Advice

TO THE

Protestant People

OF

ENGLAND.

Heartily recommended by a Lover of his

COUNTRY.

LONDON.

Printed for Randal Taylor. 1685.

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OF

ENGLAND.

Heartily recommended by a Lover of his COUNTREY.

I Think there be few men so unobserving as not to see, that many are much inclined to stand upon their guards, and by Arms (if it appear unlikely to be otherwise done) to secure themselves, and Religion, in such sort, as may seem most for their own interest, and the advantages of Truth. Therefore it shall be the business of these Papers, to enquire into the Causes and Reasons of such a disposition; together with all Motives and Encouragements thereunto.

1. Then, Some conjecture, this is the most probable way we can go to work our own interest in point of Safety, Trading and Religion:

To which I answer,

1. By way of concession, That some indeed plead a foreign War may sometimes be needful, and therefore beneficial to a Nation, if successfully managed: because it takes away many idle and Vagabond persons; many Cheats, Thieves and ill Husbands, who, like Caterpillars, only live on the fat of the earth, and as drones, or *Lurdains*, feed on other mens labours. And also as it keeps up a people in the courage, and discipline of War. For hereby a Nation is not only eased of a burden both chargeable, and troublesome; but is also made the more able to defend her self against any foreign Invader. And by the same means other Countreys may be made the seat of that War, which else in little time might have been brought home to their own doors. For by this course, the many and great Evils, that Armies generally cause in debauching of persons, in illegitimate offsprings, in wasting of goods, and cattel, are all avoided: the things that would have been consumed by persons thus employed, are saved; and the increase of such evil inhabitants mightily stopped, which things soon compensate the charges of an ordinary War.

But in a Civil War the case is wonderfully altered. For then all debauches, and illegitimate increase, is amongst our selves: then they be our own Shops and Houses, our own Barns and Stables, that are plundered: then every Trophy is an argument of our own calamity; and all spoils evidence our own losses: and every slaughter is a mischief to the whole body, from which so many members are cut off and perished. Which things necessarily make a Nation more poor and weak, and consequently a more easie prey to some foreign Assailant.

But certainly *we*, above all others, have cause to dread such a contest: by reason we are made up of so many

parties,

parties, who are all acted by different Religions and Interests; and amongst whom, on every side animosities are mightily heightned by former occurrences. That if once we fall to pieces, it is not well to be expected that any humane art, or any thing less than a Divine Power, is able to compose, and set us together. Besides which, we have dangers from without, *viz.* formidable forces, always ready, and watching opportunity of raising their own trophies on our ruines. From all which things we may justly fear, that as it hath been the fate of the strongest Empires and Kingdoms, to fall by their own hands, when others could not destroy them; that the same destiny may attend our differences.

But in case this last evil, *viz.* of a foreign force, and total ruine, do not happen; Yet look to the end of such a Contest, and perhaps we may find some reason to suspect that the concomitant miseries of a War, that is, slaughters, plunders, ruine of families, *&c.* may prove but the *beginnings of sorrow*. For, in all probability such resisters will be either the Conquerors, or the conquered. For since mens Spirits are *now* so heated, that a composure of differences is so difficult, even while peace continues; when the Sword is once drawn, it may possibly appear utterly impossible: as when the late King's Concessions were voted satisfactory by some, no Concessions would satisfie others. And let Victory incline either way, resisters must expect far greater evils than what they now lie under. For,

1. If they be overcome, reason will not suffer us to hope escaping the wrath of the Powers resisted. And so much the rather, because such will not be a single offence, but a repetition of like things still fresh in memory, and which Authority so easily passed over. And though circumstances are so much different from what they were

before, that it must needs go very hard on their sides, who may thus seek to secure themselves from what they fear: yet because men are much uncapable of receiving impressions from Arguments of this nature, by reason of their numbers (the very thing that emboldned the *Jews* to enter into a War with the *Roman* Empire, whereby they ensured and hastened the total ruine of their *Place* and *Nation*, that is, their *Religion* and *Properties* at once) I shall therefore (since suppositions grant nothing) suppose them more likely, than I judge they are, to be the Conquerors. And,

2. If so, they must look to be enslaved *either* by the Forces which made them Victorious; and then, as the *Romans* once were, be governed by a standing Army, which made Emperours, and ruled in all points according to their own pleasures; which, if ever it so happen, will, like a Band of Robbers, make spoil and plunder of all they like; and be sure will have good Commons, when they be their own carvers:

Or else fall under the will and power of some cunning head, that shall feed the Souldiery with the spoil of the people, that by them he may be empowered to act his will upon the Nation. By which means the wealth and treasure of the Land, shall be divided between tyrannical Usurpers, and the Forces that uphold them.

If you think this unlikely, reflect a little upon late disasters, and you will find, it was the misery of this Nation, that *Religion* and *Property*, all went to wrack for the satiating an hungry and ungovernable Army. Of which; a late *Non-conformist* in his *Iter Boreale* brings in the Nation thus sighing her complaints,

That I should sink with Justice may accord,
Who let my Pilot be thrown over board.

 Yet

Yet 'twas not I, ye Righteous Heavens know,
The Soldiers in my words would have it so.

And a little after he speaks of them, as setting up a single Person, after the Death of O. Cr. of whom thus:

A Legion then he rais'd of armed Sprights,
Elves, Goblins, Fairies, Quakers, and New Lights:
And with these ———
——— he Church and State possest.
Who, though they fill'd all Countreys, Towns, and Rooms,
(Yet, like the Fiend, that did frequent the Tombs)
Churches, and Church-ground, they haunted most,
No Chappel was at ease from some such Ghost.
The Priests, ordain'd to exorcise those Elves,
Were voted Devils, and cast out themselves.
Bible, or Alchoran, *all's one to them,*
Religion serves but for a stratagem.
The Holy Charms these Adders did not heed,
Churches themselves, did Sanctuary need.

Soon after they are dividing the University Lands among themselves, and in fine,

—When we have done these, we'll not be quiet,
Lordships, and Lands, Lords Rents shall be our Diet.

For which reasons men sorely repented, that they were ever thought to petition, they might be put into a posture of defence; for by this means they became utterly unable to defend their own *Persons, Estates*, or *Religion*.

And do the people really think they may become victorious, and that the Army, by which they are made so, will not be proud and insulting? or that the Commanders will

will not turn the Victory to their own advantage? C
they think men are become so honest now, to what th
were of late, when all the talk of Reformation ended
the dividing Crown and Church lands, and great me
estates amongst themselves? Can they expect better de
ing than then, when the *liberty of the subject*, so mu
talk't of, miserably sunk into a perfect bondage?
which the same *Non-conformist* thus,

Now broke in Egypt's *plagues all in a day,*
And one yet worse than theirs; we must not pray
To be deliver'd! There scab'd folk were free
To scratch where it did itch: so might not we.

Our Magistracy was, like Moses *Rod,*
Turn'd to a Serpent by the angry God.
Poor Citizens, when Trading would not do,
Made Brick without Straw, and were beaten too.
Struck with the Botch of Taxes, and Excise,
Servants, our very dust, were turn'd to Lice.
It was but turning Souldiers, and they need
Not work at all, but on their Masters feed.
Strange Caterpillars eat our pleasant things,
And Frogs croak'd in the Chambers of our Kings.

Lightning, Hail, Fire and Thunder Egypt *had,*
And England Guns, *Shot and Powder, that's as bad.*

And I am sure that War began with as fair and plausi
pleas, as any can possible be in time to come. *viz.* only
take away the sticks from before the King, that his Thro
might be established, to bring the King to his Parliament
and with solemn engagements to make him a great
Glorious Prince! To *reform Religion*, and to ascertain th

liber

Liberty of the Subject. Our concerns were in the hands of the Parliament, and the Army under the Command of persons we thought we might trust. But we see whither a few running heads, and the power of the Sword did carry things! Alas! even beside and beyond the intentions of the first actors, who were themselves enslaved, as well as them, they first exposed. And certainly we must expect that another War, alike prosperous in the success of the Sword, if any such shall ever be, will prove as unsuccessful in regard of the ends it first aimed at; so long as the like Policies and Lusts remain in the World. Nothing is more easie than for men to sit still, and frame fine Idea's and Chimera's of Government to themselves: but nothing more difficult, than to constitute a Government according to them, when the power is in the hands of other men.

Therefore all that the people are like to gain upon this supposal of becoming victorious in such a way, is only this, *viz.* the putting their *Persons*, *Estates*, *Liberties* and *Religion*, into the hands of fellow subjects, who, when they come to Government, are ever more proud, greedy and tyrannical, than those who are born in high places, and on whom the Government devolves by legal and expected descents.

But in case this Storm pass over, we yet see another Cloud arising, that will most certainly break down in Thunder, and Lightnings, and an horrible Tempest. For though now all Parties embody, and jointly endeavour to shake off Superstition, and every evil work; yet if they once shall be able to do this, they immediately fall to pieces among themselves, every one endeavouring to establish his own way. For it is not the ultimate end of any one Party meerly to ease himself of the burdens he now is under; this is but the means, and way to his last inten-

tion, which is, every one to eſtabliſh his own methods. Therefore after all the conteſt and buſtles, which we muſt certainly expect among our ſelves, upon the ſuppoſition of ſucceſs, which perhaps may prove deſtructive to the whole, if any one get into the Chair, all the reſt will combine to pluck him out: and if they gain this point, and any one of the reſt crouds in, all the other, together with him pulled out, will again combine to beat down that. By which means nothing but confuſions, and endleſs diſturbances, are like to follow, till all become a ruine to one another.

Theſe things *de facto* have been ſo: and that they will be ſo again, if ever matters come to that ſtate, is evident beyond all diſpute, from the very Opinions and Sentiments of all Parties now combining againſt the Church. For the *Presbyterian* is for a Government by a *Claſſis* or *Aſſembly of Divines*, inſtead of *Biſhops*, and to have all perſons and things kept ſtrict and tight to their methods. But the *Independent* is really for no Government at all, but would have every one a Biſhop, and Supream in his own Pariſh: and is againſt Epiſcopacy and Presbyterie, not as ſuch, but as they lay a reſtraint upon his own actings. The *Anabaptiſt* differs from both. The *Quaker* would have no Law, nor Rule, but the Spirit: And the *Fifth-Monarchy-man* will endure no Ruler, but King *Jeſus*. Therefore would every Party ſpeak his own ſentiments, they muſt own, they will by no means ſit contented in any way but their own. And that their embodying, and joint cryes for Liberty, are only to ſhake the preſent yoak from their neck, that they may be in a capacity of ſtrugling every one for his own way: And that they would not thus combine, were they ſure any one of them to change the preſent eſtabliſhment of Religion for any way but his own. Therefore ſhould the King be pleaſed to paſs

a Comprehensive Bill, or grant a bounded Liberty to all Protestants, it would please none the further, than as it layes open the Church, takes off a present restraint from the people, and gives every Party hopes at last to gain its own establishment: whence the fore-mentioned Confusions must necessarily follow, if men can ever get rid of the present establishment.

But some may plead, All this mischief may be prevented by this, *viz.* That one Party may become too strong for all the rest, and keep them from being able to make such disturbances. To which I answer,

1. That if so, no man can divine which Party that may be. For the *Presbyterian* was baited, and utterly beat out by other Parties. And I fear will be less able to stand than before, by reason *Independents* are encreased abundantly, and have gained more from the *Presbyterian* than men imagine; our Mr. *Crofton* in his Preface to his *Saints Care of Church-Communion*, argues, that a great body of *Presbyterians* are of late sunk into *Independency*. Or if otherwise, we have little ground to expect he should preserve himself against the joint endeavours of all others. And if we should ever fall under *Independency*, or a Liberty of Conscience, can we think the change worth any little part of our pains we are, or may be at? Can we think of being contented in that condition, which of late years was the anguish of our souls? Can we make that our choice, which not long since was our burden? Some men indeed are apt to reach after any thing but what they have, and hope to gather Grapes of Thorns, and Figs of Thistles, till they try, and prick their fingers.

2. Suppose the *Presbyterian* should be uppermost, this is no more than he had before, but could not keep it. For truly they are for Government; they talk't, and preach't, and wrote all they could against Liberty; they decryed

the forsaking their Church, as an unwarrantable Schism: and would severely have bound up all to their own methods: for which cause the *Independent* spoke him worse than the *Pope*. For Mr. *Sterry* in a Sermon at *White-Hall*, *Nov.* 5. 1651. tells us, that our deliverance from *Popery* is not so great a mercy, as our deliverance *from the black plots, and bloody powers of the Northern Presbyterie*. For the same cause the *Anabaptist* disputed against, and the *Quaker* disturbed him in the Pulpit, and every Party declared more against them, than against the Church of *England*: and never rested, till they had worried and run them down. And if it should be in the power of the *Presbyterian* to give Laws to others; however as a means thereto, they may yield to Indulgence, Comprehension, Liberty, or any thing; they will then lay a sufficient restraint upon the tongues of all Sectaries, and stop the mouths of error and folly; else they lose the end and fruit of all their care, pains, dangers, prayers, tears, and whatsoever they have done for the service of truth and the Gospel. They cannot suffer that *woman Jezabel, which calls her self a Prophetess, to teach, and to seduce*——which was the great sin of the Church of *Thyatira*, and for which Christ said, he had *a few things against her*, Revel. 2. 20. And if ever they come to establish a Rule, and oblige all others to it, every *Sectary* will cry *persecution*, and never cease, till they have undermined the Church and the Truth, and thrown all again into utter confusions. Should any man flatter himself into expectation of better fruit, if it ever come to tryal, the issue will confute, and fool him to his face. What a crop then must we expect from the seed of Sedition and disturbance? What an harvest, when so many hands are sowing Tares among the Wheat? Surely whatever men do hope, this will be the end of all, that they that *sow the wind, shall reap the whirl-wind*.

2. And

2. Another cauſe or reaſon of mens being diſpoſed to a reſiſtance of the Powers, is this, that they think it is their bounden duty, as it ſeems to make for the glory of God, and propagation of the Goſpel of Chriſt.

This indeed hath been the miſtake and fall of many honeſt and well meaning men, and my ſelf formerly have much ſtumbled at it. But I took the courſe which the ingenious *Carteſius* adviſes in order to the finding out any truth, which is this, to ſtrip our ſelves of all former Notions and Sentiments, or rather of all Opinions and Perſwaſions formerly imbibed, and ſo, as far as is poſſible, to bring our ſelves to doubt of every thing; and then without prejudice or prepoſſeſſion, to apply our ſelves to the conſideration of the point we would underſtand. In this way I came to be fully ſatisfied, that this point of reſiſting lawful Governours, let them be what they will, is a grand and moſt dangerous miſtake, and hath no foundation, or any the leaſt colour of encouragement from the Goſpel, or any Epiſtles, or part of the New Teſtament. And as every man is bound upon his Salvation, to come to the light, and uſe the beſt means he can to come to the knowledge of the truth: ſo I doubt not, but if any man will lay aſide his prejudices, and ſet himſelf to the impartial conſideration of theſe following heads, he will ſubſcribe to this as an undoubted truth, That a reſiſtance of lawful Governours, let the reaſons or inducements be what they will, is no way our duty, nor by any means lawful. For,

1. There is no Precept of reſiſtance in all the New Teſtament; I never heard the man, that was ſo hardy, as to plead there is: and if any think there is ſuch a Text, let him find and produce it, that we may conſider it. For Mat. 10. 34. *I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword*, ſpeaks only an accidental conſequence; an evil proceed-

ing, not from the nature of Religion, which breathes nothing but *on earth peace*, and *good will towards men*: but only from the wickedneſs of the world. And therefore ſhews us not what ought to be, but what will be, *viz.* differences upon the account of Religion: as in V. 15. —*a man at variance againſt his Father, and the daughter againſt her Mother.* And *Luke* 22. 36.——*he that hath no ſword, let him ſell his garment, and buy one.* Only gave the Diſciples an hint of the dangers and evils, that were now ready to overtake them: and did not in the leaſt authorize them to make the weapons of their warfare carnal. This appears undeniably, from our Saviours reproof of *Peter*, who could beſt expound his own meaning, when he cut off *Malchus*'s ear: of which under the next head, which

2. Shews that we have no example of reſiſtance in all the New Teſtament.

For when *Peter*, *Matth.* 26. 51. took the Sword, and cut off the ear of the High Prieſts ſervant, *Jeſus* heals the wound, and ſaith V. 52. *Put up thy ſword*——*for all they that take the ſword, ſhall periſh with the ſword.* Where the Margin points us to Gen. 9. 6. *Whoſo ſheds mans blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed.* Thereby aſſerting, that to kill any man, that comes from a lawful authority, to apprehend even the Perſon of Chriſt, is murder. Therefore to kill any ſent from Authority, though (as they think) in defence of the Goſpel, is murder too. Unleſs they make Chriſt's Goſpel more worthy of defence, than his perſon, which certainly they will not do, that talk ſo much of *Imputative righteouſneſs*, of the *perſonal excellencies of Chriſt*; *and the pretiouſneſs of Chriſt*. But if any do ſo, yet ſtill there is no example of reſiſting the Powers for defence of the Goſpel.

Therefore, this inſtance is an inſtance only of *Peter*'s

weakneſs

weakneſs and error; and gave an happy occaſion to let the World underſtand, that no Plea from the *defence of Chriſt*, the *propagation of the Goſpel*, or *the glory of God*, can juſtifie a reſiſtance, or excuſe them from murder, who kill any that are in, or come from Authority, in any manner, or to any end whatever. For if *Peter*'s caſe was not juſtifiable, I am ſure none is.

Now ſome men reject Infant Baptiſm for no other reaſon but this, *viz.* that there is expreſſed in the Goſpel no precept or example of any one Infant baptized. And certainly a precept or example is at leaſt as neceſſary in this caſe, as in the other. Therefore ſince there is none, by parity of reaſon a reſiſtance upon the ſame grounds ought to be rejected too. For the matter comes to this point, *viz.* either Infants muſt be received to Baptiſm, though the Goſpel affords no precept nor example that way: or elſe ſuch reſiſtance muſt be rejected, becauſe the Goſpel gives no precept nor example, this way. Elſe men are humorſome, and do not ſquare their opinions and judgements by Scripture; but bend that ſacred Rule to the obliquities of their own humours: or at leaſt uſe, or not uſe it, according as it may ſerve, or not ſerve their own perſwaſions, or reſolves.

3. The Goſpel abounds in precepts of obedience to Governours ſimply as Governours, and not as ſuch, and therefore to all Governours, whether good or bad. And whatever diſtinctions are made uſe of to reſtrain obedience only to ſuch, or to ſome Governours, are

1. Groundleſs and unwarrantable: for God ſaith, *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers*: and that there be no powers, but what are *ordained of God*. What warrant then have any to gainſay the Spirit, and plead that ſome are not ordained of God, and that ſome you ought not to be ſubject to? God ſaith, *Whoſoever reſiſts ſhall receive to himſelf*

himself damnation: what reason then have any to affirm that sore resisters shall not receive damnation? We ought not to bring restrictions, and limitations, unless truth, or the nature of the thing so require: and if it doth so in this case, where have you that truth? where is it written? produce your warrant, that we may see and be instructed by it.

2. Such distinctions, or limitations are as serviceable to the *Papist*, as the *Protestant*. For, because there is no Text, that saith we may resist, much less any that set forth for what causes or reasons men may do it, and that consequently this Doctrine is gathered only from illogical inferences, sound of words, and misapplication of Phrases, therefore there is no Text, that ever was, or may be pleaded, for such resistance by one party, and for one reason, but it may as well be so pleaded by any other party, and for any other reason. For instance, why may not a *Curse ye* Meroz — *because they help not the Lord against the mighty*, be pleaded by a *Papist*, as well as any other: Since each may, as indeed each do, speak themselves the people of God, and their cause the cause of the Lord, and those they oppose the mighty, and then full cry Curse all, that do not help them against 'em?

The very reason indeed of such distinctions and limitations, must be fetched from humor, interest, or ambition, which make every party willing to be a Rebel it self, but denyes that freedom to any other.

4. All the behaviour of Christ, and his Apostles, toward Governours, are but fair lessons of obedience for us to learn and practise. Christ taught us to give unto *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsars*, he paid Tribute and Customes himself, he was obedient before the Consistory of the Jews, before an Heathen *Herod*, and *Pilate*, and

and that even unto death. The Apostles taught obedience not only by precept, but example too: *Paul* appealed to *Cæsar*, whereby he owned that power, though Heathen, and persecuting too: they were persecuted almost in all places, scourged, imprisoned, and killed, and yet never medled with Civil Governours, or Government: never spoke evil of Authority, nor did any things that tended to the working in men low and cheap thoughts of them. But contrariwise, taught us to *honour the King*: and to be subject not only for wrath, or fear, but even for *Conscience sake*.

Therefore all the arguments for resistance drawn from the Glory of God, and propagation of the Gospel, are false, and unchristian. For,

1. Practices contrary to the commands of God, and example of Christ, and his Apostles, cannot be for the glory of God. Nor can sins against the Gospel tend to the propagation of the Gospel. But they that teach such things, are like those in Rom. 2. 23. *who make their boast of the Law, but through breaking the Law, dishonour God.*

2. Such things are against the very nature of Christian Religion, which is peaceable, and quiet: therefore the Prophet *Isa.* 7. 6, 7, 8, 9. tells us, that under the Gospel the *Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lye down with the Kid: the Cow and the Bear shall feed and the Lion eat straw like an Ox: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.* By which is meant, all the bestial qualities of men, whereby they devour, and destroy one another, should be changed into meek and gentle tempers. Therefore those, that are not thus transformed from evil to good, from rough and cruel, to kind and gentle, are no true subjects of Christ's Kingdom here, they are nominal, but no real Christians.

Therefore *Lactantius* observed that while all the precepts of Philosophy had but little influence on the minds of men, wherever the Gospel was really received by any, it made such visible alterations, as of lustful it made them chast and continent; of covetous, kind, and liberal, *&c.* that they were hardly known to be the same persons. This is to become indeed a new Creature: and where men are not so, but remain quarrelsome, ungovernable, and upon distaste, and cross Providences fly to the Pike and Musquet, it is plain that the Gospel of peace hath not had its work and effect upon them.

And we find our Saviour taught us rather to suffer wrong, than to right our selves by much noise and disturbance: Matt. 5. 39, 40, 41. *Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. If any man sue thee at the Law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.* And *John* 13. 35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* These were the ancient marks of Christianity, and not Drums, and weapons of War: Christians then gave one another a kiss of charity, and not reproofs on the point of the Sword. It was said by the Gentiles in the time of *Tertullian*, See how the Christians love one another! Not, as in these dayes, Behold how they slaughter and destroy! Therefore though our Saviour's rules, and precepts, are so admirably suited to the prophecies of the Gospel State, yet the Jews seeing so much of division, enmity, evil speaking, censoriousness, unruliness, oppositions, wars, and murders, among them that are called Christians, are mightily prejudiced, and hardned in their unbelief, looking for a Messias, who shall bring into the World such times of peace and love, that *Swords shall be beaten into Plow-*

shares,

Shares, and Spears into pruning hooks. Nor will conſiderate Chriſtians believe, that the ſpirit of meekneſs, patience, faith, *&c.* delights in Alarms of War. Therefore though the Devil carries on many great actions as an Angel of light, hiding ſin under the gilt of religious pretences, as revenge under colours of Juſtice, cruelty under zeal, rebellion for propagation of the Goſpel, and ruining of Families and Countries for the Glory of God: yet nothing is a greater diſhonour to God, reproach to Chriſtians, or hindrance to the Goſpel; nothing makes more Atheiſts, infidels, and looſe profeſſors, than for the ſtricteſt pretenders, and mighty zealots, who would be thought the only Chriſtians, to act contrary to the very nature and deſign of the Goſpel, as this is one, To kill, inſtead of loving one another. To reſiſt, inſtead of ſubmitting to the powers. To contemn and act in deſpight of, inſtead of ſubmitting to, every Ordinance of man. To make Songs, Libels, and invent all manner of evil on, and againſt, inſtead of not ſpeaking evil of our Rulers. It was anciently obſerved that the glory of God was more advanced, the Goſpel more propagated, and the number of believers more increaſed by ſufferings, than Arms: whence that ancient, and common ſaying, The blood of the Martyrs is the ſeed of the Church. It was three hundred years after Chriſt before the Chriſtians uſed any Armes, unleſs in the ſervice of the Emperour, who was, throughout thoſe three Centuries, a Gentile, unleſs charity will allow a plea for *Philip*. But all that while the Sword of the Lord was not in the hand of *Gideon*, but in the mouths of his Prophets: and yet then the Church enlarged herſelf, and gained upon the Gentile World in ſuch wonderful meaſures, that ſome perſecutions were raiſed purpoſely to ſtop its farther progreſs, leſt of a ſuddain the whole World ſhould become Chriſtian. But when the *Spani-*

ards cut a way for the Gospel into *America* with the sword, and seeking to conquer Soul and body at once, taught them by the mouth both of their Priest, and the Cannon, though they boast of the numbers baptized, yet I fear, scarce one became Christian any farther than in name; since they presently flew off, and would endure neither the persons that acted, nor the Religion that suffered, such slaughters amongst them. The soft breathings, and whispers of the Spirit, are soon drowned by the thundrings of Drums.

Later ages have experienced the same truth, for the patient sufferings of the *Protestants* under Queen *Mary*, increased the number of *Protestants*; and God soon removed the rod, and rewarded the Faith and patience of the Church with more outward prosperity, and greater glory of the Gospel, than ever was in this Nation before, or since. But when in the time of K. *Charles* the I. men made the Pike and Musquet the weapons of their warfare, instead of the Sword of the Spirit, and the Shield of Faith; when they pleaded they had more wit than to burn in *Smithfield*, calling the Martyrs Fools, as some have done *Abraham*, because, when called of God, he left his own Country, not knowing whither he went; the *Protestant* Religion immediately suffered her decayes, and that glorious body, which drew the eyes of all Christendom upon it, hath ever since been in the wane, till now it is almost lost in the Fogs and mist of opinion and disputes. And the *Protestant* Church of *England* is become like another *Babel*, wherein there be almost as many Tongues as men; who, instead of brick and Lime to raise the work, bring axes and hammers to beat it down.

Which together with mens falling from one error to another, and dancing all the rounds of opinion, and sinking at last into levelling principles; to own no government

but

but King Jesus; that dominion is founded in grace, and that therefore the Sts. shall rule the earth, and take to themselves the spoils of the wicked: which are tenents destructive of all Government, both in Church and State: we may judge a curse upon the new methods, that men have taken, whereby to secure Religion amongst them.

The Pope was the first that ever preached this doctrine of non-allegiance of Subjects, it was therefore from *Rome* that some Protestants took these measures: and consequently this is more truly Popery, than a Cross in Baptism, and such other things that have not like the other any intrinsick evil in them, and were in the Church long before the Bishop of *Rome* claimed the title of *Universal*. We may therefore say of such, while they damn the *Papists* for plots, and evil intendments on Governours and Government, as St. *Paul* Rom. 2. 3. *Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest those that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?*

Search into all Religions in the World, and perhaps you shall find no other but the Alchoran, that seeks its propagation by the Sword. For which very thing as well as others, it hath been condemned by all honest and judicious men. And doubtless without being censorious, we may say it is *self*, and *not the things of God*, that is sought in such wayes.

Now if interest cannot perswade, nor the Gospel teach, I am sure our Laws cannot allow such a resistance, which is the

3. Thing, some may think to justifie such practices by. For our Laws make all resistance a capital crime; without any limits, or exception; if it be not so, let any one produce but any one single Act, or any clause therein, that allows such proceedings. And whereas some plead to

ought

ought to be governed in such and such wayes, that Kings are not absolute by the constitution of our Government, these pleas do not reach the point. For in case Governours do not rule according to Law, but beside or against them, Governours are accountable to God only, but not to their Subjects, who are taught only to obey, or suffer. And I presume that no man is so daring, and wicked in his argumentation, as to undertake to make out, that in the first constitution Subjects have any power of resistance upon any account whatsoever. And I doubt not but that the wisdom and loyalty of Parliaments will evidence the same sentiments themselves

I would fain know, whether such reachings, and disputes of restless and unbridled Nature, do not drive at the same thing, that our Saviour charged as a very heinous sin upon the Pharisees, *Mark* 7. 13. that they *made the commands of God of none effect by their traditions.* The word is ἀκυροῦντες, which properly signifies to weaken or spoil of its authority, or obligatory power: which is done by pleading any humane constitution, tradition, or custom, against the Laws and Commands of God: by which means the matter is brought to this point, *whom shall we obey, God or man?* The thing is clear in the instance our Saviour gives. The Pharisees by their *Corban*, which was an Invention, and Doctrine of subtile and coverous Hypocrites, absolved children from honouring their indigent Parents with necessary supplies of food and sustenance: so such men by such pleadings of our Laws, would acquit subjects from the great obligation of honouring their Father (by which, even *Presbyterian* Writers, Mr. *Dod* in particular, understand not only natural Parents, but Kings) with the natural and indispensable duties of *tribute, custom, fear* and *honour*, *Rom.* 13. 7. We may yet further observe, that the *Jewes* had really such a Tradition, which

our

our Saviour there overthrows: but we have no such Law, therefore these Pleas run upon a false presumption, and have no foundation, and therefore are false in themselves, and need not the authority of a Divine command to the contrary, to put them to shame and silence.

I wish such men would consider that by such corrupt discourses, they utterly destroy that argument, which themselves are ready enough to use, in order to the perswading Princes to beat out Popery, and to establish the Protestant Religion in their Dominions, drawn from their own safety among Protestants, and dangers among Popish subjects; since resistance is favoured, justified and practised by both. Where was the safety of King *Charles* the First among Protestants? What is the difference between an Ax and Poison, or a Pistol? What is the difference between the Popes absolving some Subjects from their Allegeance, and your teaching, that no Allegeance or duty is owing to some Princes? What difference between the Popes disposing of Crowns, and your setting up an Usurper? Here is no room for any, unless a School distinction, which is sometimes so nice, that the difference is not to be found. But you will say, that Princes are secure enough among *Protestants*, when they rule well: but I pray who must be Judge of that? Even your own selves: and then the meaning is, they are safe, while they rule according to your own minds, but not otherwise: and so much safety there is for them amongst the worst *Papists* in the World. Therefore resisters utterly destroy this argument, and lose the great advantage they might otherwise have made of it.

It is then neither our interest, nor duty, nor the privilege of our Laws, to make resistance against Authority.

But

But there are doubtless divers motives and considerations yet remaining, from which the fondness of some men, and the subtilty of others, raise a fancied necessity of such proceedings, else they think they are all undone, Horse and Foot; Soul and body: for else say they, *Popery* will come in; for nothing is now likely to keep it out, but the Sword.

To which I answer,

1. When the Heathen Emperours commanded the Christians to deliver up their Bibles, and by confiscation of Goods, imprisonments, deaths, and all possible artifices, and cruelties, endeavoured to root the name of Christians out of the World; might not they have said, nothing but standing on our guards can save us? Yet in the time of *Tertullian*, they told the Emperour, that they had Christians in his Armies, in every Town and City, that they wanted not Arms, men nor courage, to defend themselves from persecuting hands, yet they dare do no such thing, because their Lord and Master Christ Jesus had left them no other weapons but prayers and tears. And what was the issue? God carried them through all those fiery Tryals, and increased them, as he did the Israelites of old, under the very means used for their extirpation. It is God that rules over all, and his providence extends to the meanest creatures, not a sparrow falls to the ground without his will; be sure then that his Church shall not be left to the will of his enemies, any further than serves the wise ends of his providence. The Jews when few and weak, were preserved in the midst of a world of enemies: the Christian Church upheld in the bosome of an Heathen Empire; who patiently submitted to all severities, and waited milder providences, till he pleased *to bring them forth to the light, and shew them his righteousness*, *Mic.* 7. 9. These all trusted in God, and were delivered.

Why

Why then ſhould we be faithleſs, as if the *Lords arm were ſhortned, that he cannot help us*? This in *Rev.* 13. 10. is called the *Faith* and *Patience of the Saints*, that they ſuffered, and would not reſiſt perſecuting Governours. And indeed ſuch reſiſtance moſt plainly evidences the want of Faith, and Patience both: for men firſt doubt God will not deal well by them, and then reſolve, right or wrong, to carve for themſelves. And for this reaſon God is more glorified, and Religion more advanced in unjuſt ſufferings, than in unjuſt reſiſtance, becauſe in ſuch ſufferings men ſhew their *Faith*, their *Hope*, their *Patience*, *Fortitude*, and other graces, which evidence the excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, by which they wearied and overcame their fierceſt perſecutors: and moreover the wiſdom, goodneſs, and power of God is more clearly ſeen in their preſervation and deliverance, when men *ſit ſtill and ſee the Salvation of God*, than when they ſeek by humane policy and ſtrength to ſave themſelves: for this ſpeaks both their weakneſs, and derives a reproach upon the Religion they profeſs, and alſo diſpoſes themſelves and others, to attribute what ſafety they have, not ſo much to God as to themſelves.

2. The doing evil that good may come on it, never ends well. Where I pray, is all the fruit and gain of the laſt Civil War? What is the Proteſtant Religion the better, or *Proteſtants* the ſafer thereby? Nay what have not both ſuffered ſince then, and (as we may undoubtedly affirm) for that very cauſe? For are not the confuſions of our Religion, and the danger of us all (both occaſioned by our preſent differences, and theſe differences occaſioned by that reſiſtance, and the lawleſs liberty it took to it ſelf) greater now than ever? God commonly paves men in their own Coyn. Thus upon the Babyloniſh captivity God told the remains of the people, *Jer.* 42. that in caſe they would continue in their own Land, *he would build,*

and not pull them down, v. 10. But if they would go into *Egypt* for fear of the Sword and Famine, which they afterwards did do, then v. 16. *The Sword which you feared, shall overtake you there in the Land of* Egypt, *and the Famine whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you in* Egypt, *and there shall ye dye.* Divine Justice overtakes men in their own wayes, and snares them in the works of their own hands: making those very courses whereby they would keep off judgments, to prove their ruine. I am sure the Jews found it so, for *John* 11. 48. they plead the necessity of crucifying our Saviour in order to the preservation of themselves, and their Religion. *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and Nation*: and for that very sin God brought the Romans upon them, who indeed took away their *Place* and *Nation* too. And if these things are written for our example upon whom the ends of the World are come, we cannot in any reason think we may run into those great sins of Rebellion and murther, which are a breach of so many Gospel precepts, and so contrary to the example of Christ, and all his Apostles, out of a design to secure our Religion, but we must expect a curse upon our proceedings. Did men but seriously consider, that the last war which was pretended purposely to keep out *Popery*, proved so mighty and suddain an inlet to it, that it had almost overtaken us, and the reasons of men cannot think of any thing, which in those circumstances was like to have kept it off, but his Majesties restoration; they must needs see the finger of God in that judgment: and own it exactly parallel with the two instances put before us, unless in this only, that it did not proceed to an utter ruine. And if men shall use the same methods, not only condemning things for *Popery* which are not so, as the Church of *England*, and Church men, who have done an hundred fold more to confute, and bar out *Popery* than all the

the parties in *England* beſides can pretend to; but ſhall actually oppoſe the Powers too, which were the two inſtances of the madneſs and error of the late times, I ſhall expect the ſin ſhall breed and bring forth that judgment which they fear, and which ſhall deſtroy the Actors of it. Truth needs not our lie, but abhors it: nor will Religion be ſupported by the hand of ſin, any more than the *wrath of man can work the righteouſneſs of God.*

2. Some are further confirmed in the perſwaſion that nothing but reſiſtance can ſave us, from hence, that they ſee but little execution of Laws upon Papiſts.

I anſwer,

That it cannot be denyed but that ſome *Proteſtants* have abundantly outdone the *Papiſts*, even in thoſe very things, for which the *Papiſts* are condemned. For did the *Papiſts* deſign the murther of the King, and alteration of the Laws and Religion eſtabliſhed? and I pray, did not ſome *Proteſtants* actually do all this in the memory of thouſands amongſt us, and that in the moſt open and daring methods the world hath ever heard? Yet I can find but ten executed for all thoſe Murthers and Uſurpations, and (which is the complement of all) for the murther of the late King, beyond the example of all ages, and the baniſhment of this. Look back to *May* 1679. when the Scots moſt barbarouſly butchered Dr. *Sharp*, their Arch-Biſhop; and to the Rebellion, (which it ſeems uſes to begin with the Biſhops) that broke out in the ſame month, and their ſtanding a Battle with the Kings Forces; of all whom, and for all which wickedneſs, which is death by the Law, as well as any thing charged upon the *Papiſts*, I could never underſtand that above two ſuffered. Whereas about twenty of the *Papiſts* have ſuffered within two years, and three Months laſt paſt. Therefore we may with more truth and reaſon affirm the procedure of the Laws more ſlow againſt *Proteſtant*, than againſt

Popish offenders. What reason then have some *Protestants* to complain of the slow paces of Laws in judgment and execution, when themselves are the greatest sharers in the mercy? And if from hence a party should increase, and their sentiments advance the faster, the advantage is more their own, than those mens whom they complain of. Nor have any among us any cause from thence to conclude the inclination of the Powers, either this way or that, but must impute it to clemency, and mercy, which hath ever been accounted an admirable qualification of persons in Authority; and ought to oblige all honest, and ingenuous men, to a more free and hearty love, and obedience.

And that the Lords in the Tower are not yet tryed, is very unjustly made a reflection on the King. For there is no man, that knows and considers things, but must, if truth and honesty may speak, own that the cause is not in him. For no Prince in the World would have left them more freely to justice, than the King hath done, especially to the Parliament that sat in *October* 1680. For that part of the Speech, which relates to them, seems somewhat pressing in this particular: when the Lord *Stafford* was tryed, and Sentenced to death, he quickly suffered; and that no more of them were tryed at or about the same time, was not in any thing that his Majesty hindred. Therefore, though I do not blame that Parliament, who best knew the reasons of their own Actings, yet I must in justice, and for the cause of truth, as well as the better satisfaction of the people, argue against every evil surmise and imputation, that in this affair is cast upon the King. Men are very ready to shoot their bolts, and make every thing they fancy a miscarriage, to be the *King's evil*, but when men are told, and their reasons pressed upon these considerations, I cannot hear any one so unjust to his own faculties, as to maintain the charge against his Majesty. But indeed we that are subjects,

should

ſhould ſtudy to be quiet, and mind our own buſineſs, and not meddle with perſons and things above us.

Though I muſt needs confeſs that ſome reaſons we have no more of ſettlement yet, is rather from the crys and vogue of the people than from the Policies of the King: For when men will not hear of the Tryal of the Lords in the *Tower*, unleſs they firſt ſee the Biſhops routed: When they deſire not to ſee Popery excluded, unleſs they may firſt ſee the Proteſtant Religion laid open by a Liberty, a Toleration of all Sects, perſons and things: When men would not the King ſhould have four penny-worth of Taxes, till he ſhall give away eight penny-worth of Prerogatives: When they would not have *Algier*, and the Trade of the Nation ſecured, till the King leave himſelf and friends indefenſible: When they would not have the Papiſts beat down, unleſs they may be made capable of ſetting up themſelves: When every man muſt be a Church-Papiſt, or a Field-Meeter, which is in plain Engliſh a bold Rebel; It is no wonder there be rubs in the way, and a great diſtance between our ſelves, and that ſecurity and ſettlement, we long ſince expected. And that the blame is ſtill laid upon the King, is but the old way to *blacken* his Majeſty, whereby to make men, that have more faith than reaſon, more honeſty than wit or knowledge, to become his enemies.

It was indeed the ſad fate of the late King, that he was miſ-repreſented by ſome, and miſ-underſtood by others of his Subjects, as a favourer of Popery: but now all men, that will ſee and acknowledge the truth, place him in the rank of true Proteſtants, and the beſt of Kings. And I doubt not, but the Ages to come will acquit his preſent Majeſty from any ſuch imputation, ſince the deſigns upon his Perſon from the Popiſh Party have been ſo many, and ſo deſperate: ſince he hath ſo conſtantly declared for the *Proteſtant Religion, as it is eſtabliſhed by Law*: and ſince he hath done ſo much for the ſecurity and preſervation of the

ſame;

ſame; and ſince he hath condeſcended to offer any ſafe and reaſonable expedient for the ſecurity of the ſame under a Popiſh Succeſſor, in caſe any ſuch ſhall be. But it is the unhappineſs of moſt men, that they ſee perſons the leaſt, when neareſt them; and underſtand them beſt at farther removes. Which muſt be imputed partly to this, that few know the reaſons of other mens actings, eſpecially while masked and clouded in a multiplicity of affairs and things ariſing from different parties, principles and deſigns; therefore, in ſuch circumſtances, if men judge alwayes according to outward appearance, they muſt needs ſometimes judge amiſs. For the wheels of Government ſometimes neceſſarily run in the deep, and by many oblique motions, windings, and circumferences, come at laſt to the point they firſt aimed at. Therefore when men alwayes conclude, that their Governours deſign what their faces are at any time ſet towards, they muſt unavoidably fall into error of judgement, and trouble themſelves with needleſs ſuſpicions and fears. And ſometimes the miſtake is founded on want of good information, due conſideration, ſound judgement, and an over-eaſineſs to be inclined by the unſteady meaſures of fame, which repreſents perſons and things, not according to their own natures, but according to the raſhneſs, ignorance, ill-will, ſuſpicions, and other unreaſonable humours of men. Theſe indeed are the bitter fountains, from whence our preſent, as well as late fears, jealouſies and unſettlements do ſpring.

3. Many are affrighted into a dreadful expectation of ſome ſevere viſitation by Prodigies: and therefore think it very requiſite to be upon their watch or guard, that they may be ready to receive the ſhock, or rather to ſtave the evil off.

Indeed there was one prodigious appearance in the face of Heaven in the latter end of *December*, or beginning of

of *January* last. Things of which nature have formerly been held to be Exhalations kindled in the air, and were believed to be even operative causes of evil: as sometimes of Famines, the Earth being beggered by such vast quantities of such matter drawn from it: sometimes of Pestilence, the Air being poison'd by noxious matter arising from Fens, Bogs, Ditches, Sinks, and other unwholsome places: and sometimes of War, mens minds being inflamed by I know not what influence from thence, and so disposed to quarrels and fighting. But these fancies have long since been hissed off from the Stage. For now most men hold, they are no causes, but only signs and tokens of some approaching evils. But these conceits have no foundation in Scripture: for though our Saviour foretold some notable appearances, that should precede the destruction of *Jerusalem*, yet this doth not reach our case: For,

1. That was a calamity, that admitted no parallel; it was a Type of the destruction of the world, and was to carry with it some sensible evidences of Divine displeasure, not only against that people, but their worship, which was at first established by mighty Signs and Wonders.

2. As we are not to expect any like Visitation, so we have no warrant to expect any like prodigies.

3. St. *John* in the *Revelations* threatning a ruine to so many Churches, never mentioned any such Sign that should precede that ruine, nor do we elsewhere read of any such thing observed to have preceded the same; nor doth any Text in the New Testament mention any thing of this nature, unless in those two cases, *viz.* of *Jerusalem*, and the end of the world.

4. There were, doubtless, such appearances in the several Ages of the *Jewish* Church, and are thought to be mentioned under the terms of *pillars of fire* and *smoak*, yet we no where read, that they ever looked upon them as Signs of the times, as some now take it. The *Romans* indeed,

and

and other Nations had very ſacred regards to theſe things long before Chriſt, therefore they ſeem as much of *Gentile* Original, as the *May-poll*, or any thing elſe, that is arraigned and condemned by ſome amongſt us.

And if Scripture cannot juſtifie, I am ſure Reaſon hath no plea for any ſuch matter. For the only inducement to ſuch a perſwaſion, is the common obſervation, that they are uſually fore-runners of ſome very ſore viſitation or revolution. To which we anſwer,

1. Sometimes they are owned to be tokens of good, as the birth of Princes, *&c.*

2. Many notable changes, and heavy judgements have been in the world, when men have not been alarmed by any Prodigy.

3. Come when they will, ſomething remarkable muſt be expected to follow, becauſe there is little in the world but inſtances of the frailty of nature, and uncertainty of humane affairs.

4. They do not remain fixed, like the Sword over *Jeruſalem*; nor do they hover about one Countrey only, as the Armies in the Air about *Judea*, but paſs over great part of the world. Therefore from theſe heads it undeniably follows, that men cannot ſay whether the Prodigy portends

1. Good, or

2. Evil, or

3. Neither: that is, whether any thing, or nothing.

But ſuppoſe it bodes ſome evil, yet no man can tell, whether it be

1. To us, or

2. To the Dutch. German, French, Italian, or any other, to whom it hath been as viſible, as here.

But ſuppoſe it portends ſome evil to us, yet none can gueſs what evil, whether

1. Any thing from a *Popiſh* hand, or

2. Whether

2. Whether it may not be an evil, that some men are disposed to run into, in order to keeping out some other evil they may fear.

There is no certain conjecture then from things of this nature; but they have been often abused to vanity, or wicked purposes: for while they take off mens minds from the more steady rules of Scripture, and reason, which shew men what they must expect from the works that they have done; they have usually been made an incouragement to men of all sides, parties, and causes: And have oftentimes affrighted some, and incouraged others to those disturbances, and other evils, they had not else been likely to have run into. Therefore it hath been the policy of wise men of old, observing that no good, and many times great evils befel a Society from attendance to, and conjectures from such appearances, to use all prudent means they could to take off men from such Vanities. There is as much foundation in reason for *Palmistry*, *Augury*, and such other Ethnick customes, as for presages from monstrous births, and generations on the Earth, or in the Heavens. And as the *Egyptians*, and at last the *Romans*, with other Heathen people, were the great observers of such things; so it was the Nations that lived without God in the world, who gave the first being to these conceits; for which reason we may plead, as our Saviour in another case, *after these things do the Gentiles seek*: which would be argument enough against it, were it an institution, or rite of the Church of *England*. But admit they are some generall Alarms to mankind, yet that we of this Nation should draw from them certain conclusions of evil upon us, when they pass over so great a part of the World, is an humour like that of the late times, which would have the prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelations* to be accomplished in *England* only.

But other Prodigies so much talked of, and still believed by many, there is no truth in them. For the Saddles said to rise out of the Earth, are now as confidently said to come to nothing. And all the groanings of men, and shrieks and cries of women and children, as if under some bitter torments, said by a weekly Intelligence about 17. Months since, to have been heard at *Edgehil* in *Warwickshire*, are notoriously false. What is become of the Army, and the audible reports of Guns, said to have been seen and heard at *Hatfield*, some time this winter? Where are the Armies reported to have been seen in the air in *Leicestershire*? Where is the blazing Star, said to have been visible several nights to people about *Warwickshire*, and elsewhere? I might give in a long relation of Prodigies, that have had no being, but only the fears, fancies, and mouths of the people. I find a whole heap of such stuff raked up together, in a book printed *An. Dom.* 1662, or 61. wherein we are told of a Drum beating at certain times in a well in *Oundle* in *Northamptonshire*, and of the waters turned to blood at the time the said Drum was heard, which continued by fits such a space, that people came many miles, and were frequent witnesses to those things; but when my self some time after inquired of the truth of this relation, I found the inhabitants of the place wholly strangers to any such matters. And divers other very monstrous relations, from which nothing can be learned, but the vanity, falshood, and religious frenzies of some great zealots. By which wild extravagancies they would perswade men to believe that even Heaven it self gives approbation to their cause, that the Stars fight in their courses for them, that even Nature goes out of her common paths to make way for *them*: that all the Elements, and whole Juries of the creatures, give in their verdicts for them: whence it must needs be concluded that they are

the *people of God*, and the offspring of Heaven. Though I know no greater evidences of an overgrown hypocriſie, and pride; yet it is ſtrange how wonderfully thoſe devices take with the people: for whilſt every party are of ſo different intereſts and Religions, yet they all receive theſe things with ſuch religious regards, that they will undertake to ſpell out of them the fall of Princes, the revolution of Government, and the advance every one of his own party, though as inconſiſtent together, as the preſent eſtabliſhment, and themſelves.

Now whilſt it is made a very heavy charge upon the Church of *Rome*, that they uphold their Religion by *officious lies*, and *pious frauds*: all parties amongſt us do the very ſame thing. For by theſe ſtratagems men gather, keep and increaſe their parties; for poor well-meaning people ſeldom queſtion the truth of ſuch pretended Prodigies, but receive them as ſigns from Heaven ſent to condemn what they diſlike, and approve what themſelves eſpouſe, and as aſſurances that in little time God will appear for them. Whereas would men ſpeak truth, all thoſe ſpreading parties would ſoon ſhrivel to a little ſubſtance.

And that we may not be overtaken with the error of the times, and the ſtrong deluſions the Scripture mentions, we ſhould be careful not to make Prodigies the touchſtone, whereby to try the truth of a Religion, the lawfulneſs of a Government, or the goodneſs of a cauſe. Nor ſhould we receive the reports of any Prodigies, till we ſee ſufficient confirmation, and good reaſon to do ſo. By which means we ſhall exclude many of thoſe fears, that otherwiſe may terrifie and diſcompoſe us. For as peoples attendance to ſuch things is the greateſt evidence of unſetled minds, and reaching after ſome new thing; ſo it is the ready courſe to hurry men into raſh Counſels, and thoſe precipitant actions, they may afterwards have all the rea-

ſon in the world to repent. But we ſhould bottom our ſelves upon the beſt foundation, which is a good life, and a clear conſcience from all forbidden things and works of darkneſs, and then we need not be much concerned what colours may be hung out from the battlements of Heaven, but may compoſe our ſelves into a faith and confidence that, whatever comes, it ſhall be well with us, and therefore not *fear though the Earth be removed, and the mountains caſt into the ſea.*

4. Many men are mightily moved to ſuch ſentiments, *viz.* of the neceſſity of a reſiſtance, by evil reports raiſed on Governours. For while we ſhould *not revile the Gods, nor curſe the Ruler of the people*, *Exod.* 22. 28. it is become the humor of the times to blaſt their names, and beſpatter all their Actions. Were they never ſo vile, this can be no part of our Religion, but is the work of him, who is an accuſer of the brethren: and therefore is called the Devil, from διαβάλλω to calumniate, or ſlander. But we may obſerve that all the Actions of Governours are backwards and forwards turned to evil. For while any part of the Army raiſed for *Flanders* were in Arms, they are ſaid to be kept up to ſecure our ruine: when they are all disbanded, the deſign muſt needs be to leave us naked, and expoſed to ſlaughters. This time was two year, there was no Fleet out, the reaſon of which was ſaid to be, that we might lye open to Forreign Invaſions: when the King would have ſet out a Fleet in *April* 1679. the deſign muſt then be to impoveriſh the Nation. Theſe two inſtances may mind the Reader of many others of like nature, from which it is moſt palpably plain, that a Spirit of jealouſie in ſome men, and evil intendments in others, make dangers where they cannot find them; and where there is no Bear nor Lyon in the way, will affright fools with their own ſhadows. But where men know no more than what is told them, and eaſily receive whatever is offered,

offered, it is no wonder that the *ignis fatuus* of pretended Prodigies, and the black representations of Governours and Government, bring them to their Wits end, and make them think there is no safety left, when the greatest dangers may be of their own making. It is from hence, that (as I have often observed) the same times have two faces, the one blear-ey'd and alwayes weeping, the other more fair and comely. For go amongst the common people of the Town, hear their stories, and you will think the world is at an end: for you shall see nothing but Signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and on earth Goblins and Furies, distress of Nations, mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking for the things that are coming on the world; but discourse with men that are more wise and observing, who fetch their knowledge from the things themselves, not from the reports and sentiments of others, and we find a place still left for hope, and a comfortable enjoyment of our selves: and what evil circumstances we are in, we there see not only the evil it self, but the true Origin, or cause, and therefore can the better compose and quiet our selves, than under the monstrous shapes and false accounts that are given to men in the dark. Therefore men must of necessity either better inform themselves, or not be over credulous in believing others: else they shall never clear themselves from this evil, but shall alwayes lye harrassed under false fears, and be in danger of taking wrong methods for their own safety.

Before we dismiss this Head, it will not be impertinent to observe, that though men matter not what they say of Authority among men of their own perswasion, yet some are so wary, that when they would impoyson others, and are not willing their own tongues should paint the King in those ugly colours they would represent him in, they have a cunning device of doing it by the tongues of others, *viz.* by little stories, as one between the King and the

Cobler,

Cobler, being this, That the heel of the King's Shooe coming off, he ſteps *incognito* to a Cobler to ſet it on, which done, the Cobler is paid ſo well, that he ſends for Ale to make his Maſter drink: the King drinks the Duke of *York*'s health, which the Cobler refuſes for this reaſon, that *he is a Papiſt*: then his Majeſty drinks the King's health, which the Cobler refuſes too, for, ſaith he, *the King is little better*. Which in their canting, looks like a *Metioſis*, whereby more is underſtood, than expreſt. Now becauſe themſelves dare not ſay too openly that the King is a Papiſt, therefore the Cobler is made to do it, and that not as from himſelf, but as ſpeaking the common ſentiments of the people: which is the moſt wicked way of ſlandering in the world, becauſe the voice of the people makes a much deeper impreſſion, than a ſingle opinion. The ſtory thus ended, it is pretty to obſerve, that this Cobler is made to follow the King where ever he goes. At firſt this was done at *Weſtminſter*, then *Windſor*, ſometimes in the way between both, and anon about *Newmarket*; and now at laſt at *Woodſtock*. Nor are the places more, than the times in which it hath been ſaid to be done: For I heard it firſt about two years ſince, yet now it is told afreſh, as if done this *March*, when the Court was at *Oxford*. The ſtory, it ſeems, is like the Cuckow, that comes once in the year, ſings a while till ſhe is hoarſe, and the ſtory ſtale, then lyes ſcab'd a while in a corner, and of a ſuddain comes fluſh't abroad, ſings briſk, and gains the peoples ear, as if it were ſome new tale ſhe tells.

Theſe are the great diſturbers of our peace, and the Thieves that rob us of our our beſt Jewels, in a quiet and a ſetled mind. And whilſt they talk of want of Trade, themſelves by ſuch courſes hinder it: it being the common way of men, firſt to make an evil, and then charge it upon Authority; *Kings* and *Judges* being made the *Scape-goats*, to bear the peoples ſins.

As

As there would not be many Thieves, were there no Receivers: ſo the mouth of wickedneſs would not be ſo open, were mens ears ſtopt againſt their evil whiſpers. Therefore the beſt expedient both to compoſe our minds, and to check this ſpreading leproſie, is to follow *Solomon*'s advice, Prov. 24. 21. *My ſon, fear thou the Lord, and the King: and meddle not with them that are given to change.*

In fine, men of hot heads, or deſperate fortunes, or ſuch as have fed on Crown and Church-lands (the ſin truly lying in thoſe eſtates, not in the perſons) may reach this way. But the people under a reſiſtance, are like to prove the miſerable hands, that ſhall only miniſter to the ambition and intereſt of others. For what gains can you expect, but hard marches, hungry bellies, field-quarters, frequent alarms, bloody battels, wounds, and death?

Hæc ſpolia noſtra!

If you come off with life, loſs of limbs, ſcars, pains, aches and poverty, are like to be all your trophies! For when the Parliament Army broke up, the main Body being by Arms put out of a way to live, ſome returned Slabs to their own Countreys, others ſought for death in foreign Service, and ſome turning Robbers, took up their laſt Quarters at the Gallows. Therefore though you may hear fine ſtories of *Liberty* and *Reformation*, which are alwayes the Pleas of Rebellion, 'twas ſo in the matter of *Corah*, 'twas ſo lately with us, and ſo with *Mahomet*, who in the end only purchaſed a Kingdom by his Souldiers blood; yet it is good for men to conſult their own ſafety, *and not run out of Gods bleſſing into the warm Sun.*

FINIS.